

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

## **An Act To Require a Referee of a Land Dispute To Render a Decision within One Year**

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

**Sec. 1. 4 MRSA §501**, as amended by PL 1977, c. 114, §§10 to 12, is further amended to read:

### **§ 501.Appointment; fees**

In all cases in the Supreme Judicial or in the Superior Court in which the court appoints one or more persons, not exceeding 3, as referees, masters or auditors, to hear the same, their fees and necessary expenses, including stenographic services as determined by the Chief Justice or ~~his~~the Chief Justice's designee, ~~shall~~must be paid by the State on presentation of the proper certificate of the clerk of courts for the county in which such case is pending, or by such of the parties, or out of any fund or subject matter of the action, which is in the custody and control of the court, or by apportionment among such sources of payment, as the court ~~shall~~may direct. The amount thereof ~~shall~~must be fixed by the court upon the coming in of the report. These referees, masters and auditors shall notify the parties of the time and place of hearing and ~~shall~~ have power to adjourn. Witnesses may be summoned and compelled to attend and may be sworn by the referees, masters or auditors. When there is more than one referee, master or auditor, all must hear, but a majority may report, stating whether all did hear. Their report may be recommitted. They may be discharged and others appointed.

No fee or compensation other than ~~his~~ necessary expenses ~~shall~~may be paid any Justice of the Supreme Judicial or of the Superior Court for ~~his~~ services as referee, master or auditor, but this provision ~~shall~~does not apply to an Active Retired Justice.

No per diem fee, other than necessary expenses, ~~shall~~may be paid any Official Court Reporter for ~~his~~ services in these cases.

A referee appointed to hear a dispute concerning real property must report the referee's decision within one year of appointment by the court.

**Sec. 2. 14 MRSA §1153** is amended to read:

### **§ 1153.Authority of referees**

All the referees must meet and hear the parties; but a majority may make the report, which ~~shall be~~is as valid as if signed by all, if it appears by the report or certificate of the dissenting referee that all attended and heard the parties. They may allow costs or not to either party, unless special provision is made therefor in the submission, but the court may reduce their compensation. Any referee may swear witnesses.

A referee appointed to hear a dispute concerning real property must report the referee's decision within one year of appointment by the court.

## **SUMMARY**

HP0372, LD 527, item 1, 124th Maine State Legislature  
An Act To Require a Referee of a Land Dispute To Render a Decision within One Year

This bill requires that a referee appointed by the court to hear a dispute involving real property must report the referee's decision within one year of appointment.